



TOWN OF BROOKLINE
Massachusetts
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Andrew M. Pappastergion
Commissioner

December 29, 2016

Board of Selectmen
Town Hall
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Board Members:

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Moderator's Committee on Waste Disposal, released in May 2013, and in an effort to improve the efficiency of the municipal waste collection system and reduce the occurrence of lifting related worker injuries, the Department of Public Works has proposed the implementation of a "Hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw" (HPAYT) system utilizing the semi-automated collection of variable-sized wheeled carts similar to the current single stream recycling program. In order to move this program forward, the Board of Selectmen had previously voted to approve the concept of automated collection and authorized the purchase of two (2) side-loader refuse packers, while the more complex issue of cart size, pricing and implementation was studied to determine the best town-wide solution. In May 2016, the Board held the first of two public hearings to hear public comment on this issue followed by a second hearing on December 13, 2016 when the details of cart sizing and pricing, waivers and implementation were presented by the Department of Public Works.

Cart Pricing

In an attempt to address some of the arguments made by Dick Benka concerning the pricing structure for PAYT carts, I note that his analysis was based on the inclusion of all components of solid waste collection (MSW, yard waste and recycling) and considers the total disposal amount of MSW of 9,100 tons per year. His main point was that if you calculate the volumes in all carts under the DPW methodology the total amount of tonnage is about 20,000 therefore we are charging an excessive amount for disposal. His overall pricing is then reduced by the cost recovery percentage (about 75%) to yield the desire revenue of \$2.8M. The effect of this pricing structure is that the difference in cost between various cart sizes is only about \$20 versus \$60 under the DPW structure even though both methods yield the same revenue. This results in fees that are higher for the smaller carts and overflow bags and lower for the larger carts providing a dis-incentive for residents to reduce the generation of solid waste. Implementing such a fee structure would most probably reduce the variable cart system to a single sized cart system and would not achieve reductions in MSW tonnage town-wide.

The proposed DPW fee structure is based on the following guidelines:

- cart pricing should be based on the costs of MSW collection and disposal only and not include other components such as yard waste and recycling;
- pricing should create incentives to compel less MSW generation by favoring the use of the smaller carts;
- pricing must avoid any loss of revenue generated from the current refuse fee of \$200 per year.



The unit weight of household trash (MSW) can vary from 100 – 300 lbs. per cubic yard or from 0.5 – 1.5 lbs. per gallon. In the DPW analysis, a unit weight of 1.3 lbs. per gallon was used to achieve the desired revenue of \$2.8M. If the calculation was done using the actual MSW weight of 0.6 lbs. per gallon the same revenue would be achieved by increasing each fee by the ratio of the desired revenue divided by the actual revenue.

DPW Proposal

It is the recommendation of the Department of Public Works and the Town Administrator that the Board adopt a Hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw (HPAYT) and semi-automated solid waste collection system for all residents currently receiving Town waste collection as follows:

1. Variable sized wheeled carts of 35, 65 and 95 gallon capacity will be available for residents to choose from at \$190, \$252, and \$312 respectfully per year in place of the current flat fee of \$200 per year;
2. Custom imprinted 30 gallon plastic bags will be available for purchase at local retail establishments for a fee of \$15 per roll of 5 bags to be used for overflow refuse that does not fit within the selected cart;
3. Residents will be given ample time to select the appropriate cart size on a dedicated PAYT website, by mail using postage-paid postcards or by phone;
4. The collection and disposal of yard waste and recycled products will remain free and unlimited;
5. Accommodations shall be made for households where no occupants are able to maneuver a waste cart due to physical or geographical limitations by allowing the use of custom overflow bags without a cart or as an option, the use of a small 18 gallon cart that is lighter and easier to maneuver. Applications for Waiver must be filed and approved by the DPW;
6. The DPW will provide seasonal amnesty collections twice per year that will allow for unrestricted collection and disposal;
7. Households may opt out of municipal collection and contract privately with a waste hauler if deemed to be more cost effective;
8. Accommodations will be made to collect old barrels that residents wish to dispose of for two weeks after the implementation date of the new system at no charge.

The Town of Brookline prides itself on being at the vanguard of public policy and best practices in local government service delivery. The implementation of HPAYT with semi-automated collection is a reasonable and prudent approach to solid waste management and will provide our residents with a fair and equitable system that will ultimately lead to reductions in solid waste disposal for decades to come. The Department respectfully requests you approval and adoption of this system and is available to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Pappastergion
Commissioner of Public Works

Cc: Melvin Kleckner, Town Administrator

